

Taking Your Church Planting Ministry to the Next Level

As church planters we are often more than consumed with the daily challenges of ministry. But what does the future hold? What will it take to move our current church plant to the next level—not only in effectiveness but also in deeper spiritual power? What kinds of new disciplines do we personally need to actualise so as to get to the next level? What kinds of people do we need in our lives to get there? What new behavioural changes do we need to acquire in order to reach the next level? In order to minister beyond our means and capacity and thereby see more God-sized breakthroughs occurring, we must concern ourselves with the next level of church planting effectiveness.

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Introduction:

In Germany we have various soccer leagues, going from amateur to professional. Among the professional leagues we also have three levels in the Bundesliga. What is the church planting league in which you are currently playing? Can you describe it? What is the next league above that? Can you describe it?

Knowing where we are in church planting ministry is the prerequisite to knowing where God wants us to go. How can we move from our current level of ministry to the next level?

I. Enlarge your Tent (Isaiah 54:2-3)

- A. Spatially – from city to region, from region to country, from country to continent
 - Questions: What is my current space of ministry? What is my next spatial challenge?

- B. Relationally – from one-on-one to groups, from groups to networks
 - Questions: What kinds of sociological units am I relating to? Does something need to change, if so what?

- C. Strategically – from one church at a time to generations of churches (Generation – 3yrs)
 - Questions: What am I counting? What would it take to count differently?

- D. Influentially – from immediate to intermediate, from faithfulness to faithful and fruitful
 - Questions: How could I reposition my life to see more results for the kingdom of God? What would those results look like?
- E. Spiritually – from talking to listening, from engagement to disengagement
 - Question: What is currently keeping me from becoming more like Jesus?

II. Lift up your eyes (John 4:35)

- A. To see the harvest – from one lost person to milieus of lost people
 - Questions: What different milieus am I observing? What am I learning from secular people in terms of how they think and feel toward God and the gospel?
- B. To see the opportunities – from living in the culture to transforming the culture
 - Questions: What real needs do people have that municipalities are not meeting? What expertise does our group have that could meet peoples needs?
- C. To see the unseen – from being limited by circumstances to being driven by faith
 - Question: When have I last prayed in faith until I had assurance of an answer from God?

III. Let your heart be strengthened (Psalm 31:24)

- A. By allowing loss and depression to run their course – Your ministry is loss-prone
- B. By learning to say “no” (Spurgeon: “Learn to say no, it will be of more help to you than to read Latin.”)
- C. By learning to linger with your spouse
- D. By disengaging from work and by engaging in Sabbath disciplines
- E. By learning from your failure
- F. By celebrating God’s goodness and successes

Further Study:

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